

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 19, 2014

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 21, 2014

Senate Concurrent Resolution

No. 86

Introduced by Senator Hueso

February 21, 2014

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 86—Relative to heavy school backpacks.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 86, as amended, Hueso. Heavy school backpacks.

This measure would acknowledge the health risks that heavy backpacks pose to schoolchildren and recommend certain measures to be taken in that regard to avoid injury.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Overloaded school backpacks are causing an
- 2 increasing problem of back pain and spinal strain in ~~students~~ *pupils*
- 3 in elementary and secondary schools across the nation; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Because spinal ligaments and muscles are not fully
- 5 developed until after 16 years of age, overweight backpacks are a
- 6 source of repeated low-level stress that may result in chronic neck,
- 7 shoulder, or back pain in children; and
- 8 WHEREAS, Reviews of data have revealed over 7,000
- 9 emergency room visits, and over 28,000 doctor's office visits, per
- 10 year by children for backpack-related injuries; and
- 11 WHEREAS, Studies of the effects on children of carrying heavy
- 12 backpacks have shown that heavy loads carried on the back have
- 13 the potential to compress intervertebral ~~disk~~ *disc* height and damage

1 the soft tissues of the shoulder causing microstructural damage to
2 the nerves; and

3 WHEREAS, ~~Students'~~ *Pupils'* textbooks are much heavier now
4 than many years ago and, in addition to textbooks, ~~students~~ *pupils*
5 often carry computers, cell phones, water bottles, running shoes,
6 band instruments, and other equipment considered essential to
7 have readily available; and

8 WHEREAS, The State Board of Education, pursuant to
9 Assembly Bill No. 2532 (Chapter 1096 of the Statutes of 2002),
10 adopted maximum weight standards for textbooks, and required
11 textbook publishers to submit lightweight alternatives to print
12 materials; and

13 WHEREAS, More than 90 percent of children carry a school
14 backpack, which studies have found to weigh as much as 25 percent
15 of the child's body weight; and

16 WHEREAS, Backpacks are often not worn correctly and are
17 frequently slung over one shoulder or allowed to hang significantly
18 below the waistline, increasing the weight on the shoulders and
19 causing the child to lean forward when walking or standing to
20 compensate for the weight; and

21 WHEREAS, Rolling backpacks remove the weight from a
22 child's back, but are sometimes not allowed in schools due to a
23 concern over being a trip hazard in the hallways or because of the
24 difficulty of carrying them up and down stairways; now, therefore,
25 be it

26 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
27 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature strongly recommends that
28 all school administrators, teachers, parents, and school children
29 be educated about the potential health impacts of heavy backpacks
30 and take proactive measures to avoid injury; and be it further

31 *Resolved*, That schools should work with parent-teacher
32 organizations to assess the extent to which their ~~students~~ *pupils*
33 use overweight backpacks and to promote innovative homework
34 strategies that lessen the need for ~~students~~ *pupils* to take school
35 materials and books from school to home each day; and be it further

36 *Resolved*, That the Legislature urges schools to do the following
37 when developing their guidelines for ~~students'~~ *pupils'* use of
38 backpacks:

39 (a) Discourage ~~students~~ *pupils* from carrying a backpack that
40 weighs more than 10 percent of a ~~student's~~ *pupil's* body weight.

1 (b) Encourage the use of ergonomic backpacks with
2 individualized compartments to efficiently hold books and
3 equipment.

4 (c) Encourage ~~students~~ *pupils* to wear both shoulder straps and
5 not sling a backpack over one shoulder.

6 (d) Encourage the use of wide, padded, adjustable backpack
7 straps that fit the ~~student's~~ *pupil's* body.

8 (e) Encourage ~~students~~ *pupils* to leave the heaviest books at
9 school, and urge teachers to give handouts or workbooks that can
10 be used for homework assignments.

11 (f) Encourage schools to make electronic versions of textbooks
12 available, as federal and state funding for that purpose becomes
13 available.

14 (g) Offer ~~students~~ *pupils* integrated education about backpacks
15 by using a hanging scale in the classroom to allow ~~students~~ *pupils*
16 to weigh their backpacks and enter the weight into a graph that
17 would track the weights and use the data to determine whether a
18 ~~student's~~ *pupil's* backpack is too heavy, and provide information
19 about ways to lighten the weight of a backpack; and be it further

20 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
21 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.